

May 2018 Council of Elders Summary

Susan Eastburg opened with a devotion on love (the first fruit of the Spirit).

The delegates to the Great Lakes Conference Annual Meeting shared their reflections on the event. Brian & Sarah DeBaets wrote a letter highlighting workshops on organic outreach, human sexuality, worship, and church revitalization. Alex & Michael Weller reported in person on this being a good introduction to the Evangelical Covenant Church, church visioning, volunteer retention, dinner, and the business meeting. Overall things are generally going well for the conference. Thornapple member Mickey Tresh is the treasurer of the conference and did a nice job presenting.

Treasurer Marc Kole gave a Finances 101 presentation introducing elders to the financial functions of the church and parties responsible for those functions. He then spoke to the role of elders in monitoring the overall financial health of the church. Finally, he talked elders through his monthly report explaining how that data connects to the elders' responsibility in the church's finances and helps them in their role.

April giving was better than budget. Giving on the year is still \$50,000 behind where we expected it to be though April. The expense reduction plan that elders approved last month lowered expenses by \$14,000 in April. There is an operating deficit of \$45,000 through April.

Pastor Karen gave an update on the all-church volunteer appreciation dinner on June 3.

Pastor Andrew gave an update on Nepali-speaking ministry. A group of 12-15 adults have gathered on Sundays with consistency.

The loan documents with National Covenant Properties for the building project were signed last week. Construction will begin next week. Unrelated to the building project, the \$100k line of credit that the congregation approved last summer was also finalized and is ready if we need it.

Mike Smith gave a building project update. Project cost is right at the budgeted \$4.8M. Contracts are being issued. Construction begins next week. Communication plan to congregation was discussed via multiple channels - in worship, via email, newsletter.

Suzanne Lieuwen and Brenda Veltman are on Pastor Rob's sabbatical committee. They gave an update that photos are online, people are signing up to pray, and the plan for communication with the congregation.

Elders and staff attended an Organic Outreach workshop with Kevin Harney. It provided practical helps for thinking more about those around us who are far from God and interacting with them in natural ways.

Elders and staff attended a human sexuality seminar put on by The Center for Faith, Sexuality, and Gender with Preston Sprinkle. The organization is of like mind with the Covenant Church in holding the historic Christian understanding of marriage and the courageous love of Jesus toward all people.

Pastor Karen gave an update on the community partnership with the local YMCA. One idea is a program for mothers experiencing postpartum depression.